

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1, 11, 20, and 26 have been amended. Claims 10, 19 and 25 have been cancelled. The limitations of cancelled claims 10 and 25 have been incorporated into claims 1 and 20, respectively. Thus, claims 1-9, 11-18, 20-24, and 26-29 remain pending in the present application. No new matter has been added. In light of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all presently pending claims are in condition for allowance.

II. THE 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Fesco (U.S. Patent No. 3,738,091) in view of Zhang (U.S. Patent No. 6,156,086).

Claim 1 has been amended and now recites, “[a] filter bag for a vacuum cleaner, comprising: a substantially tubular bag made from a bag material having at least one non woven composite layer, the bag having a closed free end area and an at least partially closed area opposite the closed free end area; and a retaining plate, wherein edges of the bag are at least partially interconnected by a weld seam to form the at least partially closed area, and wherein a bottom of the bag is formed by at least partially interconnecting plies of the bag material at least in areas in which plies of the bag material lie one above the other, *wherein a pre-crease is introduced into the bag material substantially parallel to the weld seam in the bottom.*”

Fesco describes the method by which a filter bag is made. This method consists of a sequence of deforming a blank 40, which comprises a plurality of panels and folding lines. (*Id.*, col. 3, ll. 19-65, Fig. 6). After creating the bag using the method disclosed by Fesco, the “provision of the adhesive defined by the stippled areas on the panels 48 and 62 respectively permits the bag 20 to be closed at the opposite end thereof. (*Id.*, col. 5, ll. 66-68). However, Fesco fails to disclose or suggest that a pre-crease is introduced into the bag. Fresco states that blank 40 is provided with “six longitudinal scored folding

lines generally denoted by the reference characters 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, and 60 respectively.” (*Id.*, col. 3, ll. 26-29). Applicant respectfully submits that a scored folding line does not meet the recitation of a pre-crease. A scored folding line is merely a marking, whereas a pre-crease is a crease introduced into the material before the filter bag is manufactured. Accordingly, Fesco fails to disclose or suggest “*a pre-crease is introduced into the bag material substantially parallel to the weld seam in the bottom.*”

Applicant respectfully submits that Zhang fails to cure the above mentioned deficiencies of Fesco. Furthermore, Zhang discloses a filter bag formed by two overlaying laminates that are welded together at the seams. (See Zhang, Figs. 3-4). So the Zhang filter bag is not tubular and does not include a retaining plate. Thus, the teachings of Zhang are not transferable to the teachings of Fesco.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Fesco and Zhang, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest “*a pre-crease is introduced into the bag material substantially parallel to the weld seam in the bottom,*” as recited in claim 1. It is, therefore, respectfully submitted that claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-9 and 11-18 are allowable.

Claims 20-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over Fesco in view of Zhang and further in view of Hall et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,009,925).

Hall states that “the invention permits medical products, such as blood bags, catheters and compression sleeves.” (See Hall, col. 5, ll. 55-57). Hall also explains that the purpose of these products is “so that the medical products do not discharge toxins when they are incinerated or buried in a landfill.” (*Id.*, ll. 59-60).

Applicant respectfully submits that Hall’s apparatus also fails to cure the above-mentioned deficiencies of Fresco and that Fresco, Zhang, and Hall, taken alone or in any combination, fail to disclose or suggest “pre-creases are introduced into the bag material, wherein at least one of the pre-creases is substantially parallel to the partially closed area

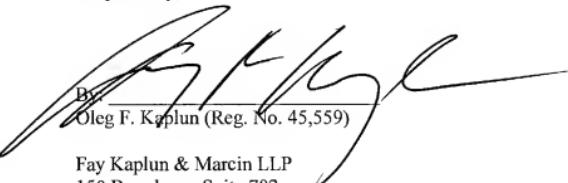
on a closed side of the bag,” as recited in claim 20. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 20 and its dependent claims 21-24 and 26-29 are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons presented with regard to claim 1.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully,

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